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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10 YEARS
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SUBJECT: SALVADORAN READOUT OF BELIZE SICA SUMMIT

Classified By: Ambassador Charles L. Glazer, Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (SBU) Meeting on Belize's San Pedro Island, leaders of member states of the Central American Integration System (SICA) discussed and approved a GOES proposal to enhance cooperation and coordination among the Central American countries regarding regional security and crime. The proposal was divided into several sections to address organized crime, narcotics trafficking, gangs, terrorism, intelligence, border security, and legal issues. The proposal also contemplates a common Central American arrest warrant, but--disappointingly--makes no mention of extradition. Post will forward an English version of the proposal with revisions made during the Belize conference as soon as it is available.

¶2. (C) On July 3, Legal Attache (FBI), DOJ Attache, and INL Director met with Civilian National Police (PNC) Director Rodrigo Avila, who authored the Salvadoran proposal and attended the SICA summit, in order to ascertain his perspective on the SICA process and regional integration on law enforcement issues. Avila (strictly protect) acknowledged the need for regional integration, and offered assurances that the Saca administration is committed to advancing the cause. However, when pressed on the specifics of the Salvadoran proposal, Avila conceded that--at best--the document represented no more than the political desires of SICA member states. The Belize summit witnessed no serious debate on the proposal, and no technical discussions have occurred regarding its implementation. Politically-sensitive issues such as extradition were intentionally excluded in order to ensure consensus. Avila was uncertain as to how SICA member governments will develop a budget, and what type of assistance they may request from the USG.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: SICA has heretofore functioned primarily in customs and immigration integration; only recently has it tackled politically-sensitive issues such as security and organized crime. Avila readily conceded that he would not share delicate intelligence with Guatemala and Honduras, given the current state of their police forces. Post acknowledges the value of encouraging regional integration on security issues, but cautions that the process may not proceed as rapidly as the Centrals indicate publicly. The USG must encourage SICA member states to move ahead technical discussions on further security integration as soon as possible. END COMMENT.
Glazer